labor ableism K:

A living wage, utilizes a classic conception of work as a locus for dignity and value. This involves rhetorical violence against persons with disabilities and reentrenches the idea that value reorientation begins with the flesh that society has already commodified rather than the flesh that society has spurned.

Glorifying and attaching dignity to human work is able-ist and ignores the marginalization of persons with disabilities when they try to fit into the traditional model of productive work that you claim is so valuable. **TAYLOR[[1]](#footnote-1):** One fact that makes disability so hard to understand is that there is no single model of disability; the human body can be impaired in an almost infinite number of ways, and people of all walks of life can become impaired. “As with the population as a whole, disabled people are characterized by difference rather than normality: differences in terms of gender, minority ethnic background, sexual orientation, age abilities, religious beliefs, wealth, access to work and so on. Clearly, their situation cannot be understood or, indeed, transformed by any theory or policy which is based on conventional notions of normality and the existence of a single set of culturally dominant values.” The only thing impaired people have in common is their political disablement and the economic, behavioral, and emotional similarities that impairment can cause. Disability, partly as a result of this intense differentiation of those people affected, may be the only branch of the civil rights movement that cannot be appropriated. Disabled people are an example of a movement and identity whose image and capabilities are infinitely various. This variety, however, is what makes us so difficult to incorporate into the modern corporate environment; what changes will need to be made for us, what adaptations, what special accommodations, what costs will be incurred, and what profits diminished? Despite advances, both in theory and in practice, disability rights remain some of the last to be thought about, and as a result are typically some of the first to be forgotten when it comes time for cutbacks or budget “reform.” The disability movement has failed as of yet to convince people that our existence in society is valid and essential. The public remains unconvinced that our struggle is actually theirs as well; advocates for the disabled are *de facto* fighting for the rights of the elderly, and many of the services they are demanding will help their able-bodied counterparts as well, both directly (for example, when a worker become temporarily impaired or by providing able-bodied individuals with more options as they inevitably age) and indirectly (they may enjoy peace of mind because a loved one is living happily in their own home with the help of an attendant). We have failed to get our point across; but what is our point? Perhaps it is best expressed in the idea that disability is a political issue not a personal one. Disability theorists make this clear by making a subtle but significant distinction between disability and impairment. The state of being mentally or physically challenged is what they term being impaired; with impairment comes personal challenges and drawbacks in terms of mental processes and physical mobility. To be impaired is to be missing a limb or born with a birth defect; it is a state of embodiment. Being impaired is hard. Without a doubt, it makes things harder than if one is not impaired. However, more often than not, the individual accommodates for this impairment and adapts to the best of their ability. For example, I am impaired by arthrogryposis, which limits the use of my arms, but I make up for this in many ways by using my mouth. Disability, in contrast, is the political and social repression of impaired people. This is accomplished by making them economically and socially isolated. Disabled people have limited housing options, are socially and culturally ostracized, and have very few career opportunities. The disabled community argues that these disadvantages are thus not due to impairment by its nature, but due to a cultural aversion to impairment, a lack of productive opportunity in the current economy for disabled people, and the multi-billion dollar industry that houses and “cares” for the disabled population that has developed as a consequence of this economic disenfranchisement. This argument is known as the social model of disability. Disablement is a political state and not a personal one and thus needs to be addressed as a civil rights issue. Viewing disability in a materialistic framework demonstrates how this political repression functions. Take disability theorist Brendan Gleeson’s adaptation of the analysis of Karl Marx, who defined nature as existing prior to and independent of human experience, and yet simultaneously as something that “attains its qualities and meanings by means of a transformative relationship of human labor.” Nature exists outside society as an objective reality, but it is also used and changed by humans to meet their needs. Marx used the notion of “two natures” to describe this historical transformation and he argued that this change was formed through human labor. Almost all of the terrestrial “natural world” has been somehow altered through human intervention, and nature is indissolubly connected to human society. Marx used this analysis of nature to show how the capitalist mode of production “altered nature so as to deny for much of humanity their species potential.” Nature pre-exists social formations, but is itself evolving also, not only due to biological and ecological factors, but also through human intervention. Each human relates to nature through their own physical experience as gendered, as aged, and as abled, and each experience of embodiment should be seen as both historically and socially evolved through natural elements. The body is both a biological fact and cultural artifact; “the former constitutes a pre-social organic base upon which the latter takes form.” Disability activists and theorists see impairment as equivalent to “first nature” and disability as an example of “second nature.” Marx and later theorists have shown how capitalist development has privileged certain biological forms of embodiment (for example white able-bodied males). Because of this, it is important when trying to understand the impact of space on bodies (for instance inaccessible buildings and transportation), to consider who is forming (and has formed) spaces and who inhabits them. The extreme inaccessibility and alienation felt by impaired people may not be a natural consequence of their own personal embodiments in the twenty-first century, but instead a complex system of historical, cultural, and geographical discrimination that has evolved inside and alongside capitalism and that we now simply regard (and too frequently dismiss) as disability. Crippled and elderly people have an especially precarious relationship to the machine that is production and consumption. People work hard, they age, their efficiency inevitably lessens and, unless they are fortunate enough to have some savings stashed away, they are too often put in nursing homes where their new value will be as “beds.” As Marta Russell has astutely pointed out, the institutionalization of disabled people “evolved from the cold realization that people with disabilities could be commodified…People with disabilities are ‘worth’ more to the Gross Domestic Product when occupying a bed in an institution than when they’re living in their own homes.” Gleeson argues that with the transition from feudalism to capitalism, impaired people became unproductive members of society and thus disabled. The rise of commodity relations profoundly changed those processes of social embodiment that originated in work patterns. In particular this political-economic shift lessened the ability of impaired people to make meaningful contributions to their family and households. Markets introduced into peasant households an abstract social evaluation of work potential based upon the law of value; that is to say, the competition of labor-powers revealed as average socially necessary labor times. This productivity rule devalorized the work potential of anyone who could not produce at socially necessary rates. As households were progressively drawn into dependence upon the competitive sale of labor-power, their ability to host “slow” or “dependent” members was greatly reduced.

The alternative to refuse the valorization of labor in favor of a non-productive system of inherent value. **TAYLOR (2):** These material changes (accessible buildings and transit, and independent living) are absolutely necessary for the liberation of the impaired population. Many disabled have in fact fought for a living wage (it was an early disability cause in Britain), a cause worthy of the support of advocates for the impaired and for humanity in general; yet this cause necessarily demands a reevaluation of the role and significance of work and implies a right not to work as well as a right to live. In a capitalist consumer society where everyone wants the perfect face, perfect job, perfect family, and perfect body, disability will never be appreciated or even fully accepted. In a culture in which the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy is essential, the dependence of disabled people (because they do not live up to this myth), may always be reviled or at least patronized. Even progressive institutions and people have discriminated against me more times than I can count. Progressives, like most able-bodied people, are loathe to identify with crippled people and more often than not refuse to acknowledge two simple truths. The first is that they, if they live long enough, will join our ranks. Impaired advocates sometimes joke that people should actually consider themselves “temporarily abled.” We all age and most people end up infirm. It is astounding how little concern there is for the quality of life and the unfreedom of the elderly in this society; I can only surmise that it is the result of a collective coping mechanism of denial. The second fact is that the treatment of disabled people is merely a more pronounced form of the condition of other populations in the contemporary workplace. Many Americans lack affordable health insurance, secure employment, and are also denied the right not to work. The casualization of employment, inadequate wages, the return of many senior citizens to the workforce when they can’t make ends meet after retirement, the lack of paid vacation, the encroachment of the work week on our weekends and evenings, and mounting debt for the poor and middle classes, all evidence a lack of freedom from work oriented activity and anxiety. Working masquerades as the ultimate freedom and the premiere signal of independence, and yet more commonly seems to represent just the opposite of those two ideals.

the link is a DA to the perm; the question of the debate is what starting point we should use to tackle ableism in the status quo and the affirmative focuses on valuing the economic productivity of disabled individuals rather than their inherent worth.

race impact:

The idea that slaves were fungible stemmed from the idea that they were valued for their capacity to labor. **JACKSON[[2]](#footnote-2):** It is certainly imperative to contextualize the beginnings of Black racial representation, on stage and elsewhere, with the conterminous “peculiar institution” of slavery (Karenga, 2002) in the United States. Although I will neither specifically examine indentured servitude nor explore the system whereby Blacks became slave owners, I do acknowledge that such systems existed alongside the much more expansive system of slavery discussed here. American presidents such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson owned several slaves. Appiah and gates (2003) maintained that “most of the founding fathers were large-scale slaveholders, as were eight of the first twelve presidents of the United States” (P.850). In fact, the extended kin of Jefferson, beginning with his enslaved mistress Sallie Mae Hemings, remains a matter of public speculation (Khamit-Kush, 1999; Vivian, 2002). As Means-Coleman notes (2000), “the importation of foreign slaves,” which began in 1517, “ended in 1807 with more than enough, approximately three million slaves [still] on American soil” (p. 37), but by that time estimates that suggest as many as twenty million slaves and perpetual indentured servants, foreign and domestic, existed throughout the period some euphemistically called “The Middle Passage” (Franklin & Moss, 1988). The maafa or holocaust of enslavement was one of the most tragic events in the history of the world. Multiple historical accounts all agree on the atrocious details of the transportation of African slaves to the New World (Franklin & Moss, 1988; Karenga, 2002). A minimum of two slaves’ hands and feet were chained together and fastened to the boat. Many of the three- or four-ton boats were packed with hundreds of auctionable slaves to the extent that bodies were sandwiched together with little interstices left open for breathing, disemboguing, and defecating. Slave auctioneers knew they could maximize profits if they brought as many Blacks as possible, risking the slaves’ lives in the process for no other reason than the perception that Black bodies were dispensable. Naturally, before the vessel reached its destination, some dehydrated and starved slaves who were barely able to move did not survive the pathogenic conditions that were unfit for any human. The deceased and diseased Black bodies were jettisoned. They were considered ruined, spoiled goods, and, since they were mere property, there was no need to hold a funeral or perform a ceremonial burial. This is among the most gruesome examples of gross maltreatment related to race and economy in the world. It could be argued that Western traders and slave owners did not have any sense of what race was at that time, and perhaps that is true, but the beginning of slavery was the direct and immediate antecedent to a concept said to have been conceptualized only decades later in 1684 by French physician Francois Bernier (West, 1993). He developed the term to classify dead bodies, and his catalogue of races inspired centuries of racial labeling and pseudoscience. At one point, the number of racial labels amounted to three to five races. Later, as many as three hundred races were counted. The term became diluted, but still was considered useful as a logical device. Seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century eugenicists, many of whom were esteemed intellectual and founders of academic disciplines such as paleontology, astronomy, and anthropology, discovered that racial logic helped to demonstrate what would become uncontested truth claims: that Blacks were intellectually, behaviorally, interpersonally, and physically inferior and should be treated as objects (Jackson, 1999). This devaluation and objectification of Black bodies arrested any agency to define the Black self, but also intercepted any public valuation of Blacks as subject. Subjectivity was owned by Whites; they were self-authorized to see themselves as pure, good, competent, and desiring of privilege. They devised the essence of racial particularity by averting their gaze away from Blacks and applying injunctive pressure on them to behave in was that compiled with their own modernist obsessions. As Bhahba (1986) asserts, Otherness is an *episteme* in White colonialist discourses used to mark socioeconomic boundaries of racial difference and announce the superiority of the hegemonic subject—in this case, whiteness and White bodies. Brought here in chains, Blacks and particularly Black bodies, in what we now know as the United States, never had the chance to be valued, celebrated, or even considered a citizen until 1863, well over 300 years after the first African slaves arrived in the New World. They were property or possession whose foreign and physical bodies were literally considered tools for labor and procreation that we evacuated of thought and culture. It was practically unimportant whether they could think beyond accomplishing a series of menial tasks demanded of them. Psychically, salve owners fostered a climate of separation that would not allow communion of slave and slave master as human beings. The civilized-savage and human-inhuman dichotomies were intentionally arranged by the owner to maintain distance and disdain, to prove to his self that Black bodies were devoid of interiority or basic thinking and reasoning skills Though illogical, it seemed the slave’s exteriority was all that was of concern. It was that which facilitated the slave master’s detachment from seeing the Black body as human. The body was legibly encoded and scripted as an object of specularity and, consequently, became its own discursively bound identity politic. This politic is embedded in white supremacist ideology and Black corporeal inscription. That is, ideology, as Gary (1989) and Althusser (1994) suggest, becomes a concrete, taken-for-granted fact, moving from ideology to axiology in sometimes unnoticeable ways. If properly designed, social participants, in this case white social participants, see ideology not as a version of truth, but *the* only truth worth knowing. The body can be said to be political because it, as an immediately identifiable and visible marker of difference, accounted for the distribution of material, spatial, temporal resources Black bodies were not allowed to share. It was discursively bound because, although it was polysemic, the primary meaning the Black body conveyed was its correspondence to an object believed to be a subhuman, heathenish utility. The body was needed to perform labor and generate revenue; therefore, as long as the slave appeared happy-go-lucky, his or her physicality and physical readiness were of the utmost importance. It is no mistake that most of the literature examining social reproductions and prescriptions o the body peak primarily of visual interpretations of exteriority (Johnson, 1994; Levinas, 1969; Pinar, 2001; Wiegman, 1993, 1995). He epistemic violence that augments and is concomitant with the social construction of race and racism is shuttled principally by the recognition of visible racial markers or corporeal zones rather than by its interiority composed of organs, glands, bones and so on.

1. Taylor, Sunny. “The Right Not to Work: Power and Disability,” *Monthly Review*, 2004, Volume 55, Issue 10 (March) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ronald Jackson II [He is a professor of communication, culture, and media, and a former dean of the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Cincinnati.] *Scripting the Black Masculine Body: Identity, Discourse and Racial Politics in Popular Media.* State University of New York Press. Albany. 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)